1.5. ARMY SERVICE

ESERT VOICE

June 9, 2004

The Road To Iraq



U.S. Army road warriors the heavy haulers of Operation Iraqi Freedom

necessarily the size of the dog in the fight; it's the size of the fight in the

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Spc. James Etter keeps a wary eye while patrolling the perimeter of Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Etter is assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 146th Field Artillery Regiment, deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Photo by Spc. Scott Akanewich

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COMBAT LEADERS IDENTIFICATION INSIGNIA AUTHORIZED

Combat Support and Combat Service Support leaders are now authorized to wear the green cloth loop that had distinguished only combat arms leaders. Leaders Army-wide are warfighters!

Aisrouted Mail

can occur when vour camp or 'Kuwait' is on the address Use name, unit, apu & Zin oniv

Define Leadership?

the organization. and improve the mission to accomplish while operating -- noitsvitom direction and bnrpose, by providing influencing people Leadership is



The Desert Voice staff welcomes your story suggestions and photos. Email them to us, or call us at DSN 825-5332 or 825-4730.



Soldiers of the 2123rd Transportation Company form a pyramid around a Heavy Equipment Transporter. The Kentucky National Guard unit is tasked with moving supplies from Kuwait across the border into Iraq. (Photo by Spc. Karima L. Mares, 13th Public **Affairs Detachment)**

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229 YEARS ON POINT!

No other Army has fought so hard and so often to bring others freedom.

If you were going to make a list of the great events in American history, you'd likely start with the Revolution, which won America its independence. Liberating Western Europe and defeating the Nazis would certainly be on that list, as would halting the invasion of South Korea, standing firm against communist expansion during the Cold War and liberating Kuwait from the clutches of Saddam's Regime.

In this, the 229th year of the U.S. Army, you can take great pride in knowing no other Army in the world has fought so often and so hard to bring others freedom.

Your efforts and professionalism have brought tremendous pride to the American people. In the past three years alone, we have overcome immense challenges to win two wars of liberation in their name. Because of the efforts and sacrifices of our servicemembers, Afghanistan and Iraq are now free of cruel and oppressive rulers.

It is for good reason that Time magazine not long ago selected the "American Soldier" as its Person of the Year. The challenges of the Global War on Terrorism and bringing stability to Iraq are great. It is a fight that we must win, not just because to admit defeat is to encourage terrorists, but because our success in Iraq will reverberate throughout the Middle East. If democracy for 25 million Iraqis, and ultimately 300 million Arabs, isn't something worth fighting for, what is?

You are an important force for good, and this is a fight worthy of our efforts. Today's U.S. Army is an expeditionary force that requires its Soldiers to always hold the high ground. In an age of instantaneous worldwide communications, we operate knowing that our every action is scrutinized. Any demonstrated weakness, whether in character, action or judgment, has immediacy and impact far beyond our tactical operations. It is for good reason that the U.S. Army requires its leaders of all ranks to remain vigilant and committed to setting the example.

Our nation recognizes that this is an age of great challenges and great duties for all of us in uniform. A few weeks ago, the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved a \$447 billion defense bill that, among other things, would increase the size of the Army by 30,000 troops. This bill must still be passed in the Senate, but it would bring the active-duty strength of the Army to 512,000 troops by 2007, an increase of 6 percent if approved.

The bill also provides a 3.5 percent acrossthe-board military pay increase and more than doubles the allotment for hardship duty. It would make permanent extra pay for those facing imminent danger and give reservists serving on active duty for more than a year up to \$3,000 a month to replace lost civilian income.

This huge defense measure has been called a "Soldier's bill" because it speaks directly to the appreciation of the American people and the value they place on the job you do. Ours

> is a grateful nation, which appreciates all the efforts, dedication and daily sacrifices of its Soldiers.

For 229 years, the U.S. Army has served in defense of freedom creating a legacy that has earned America a



LTG David D. McKiernan Commanding General CFLCC, Third Army

place in the pantheon of great civilizations. History will look with favor on our nation for striving to make the world a better place and salute our military for distinguishing itself with honor and professionalism.

Here in Kuwait, you stand in the tracks of a long line of resolute Soldiers who came to the defense of freedom. Your efforts today contribute to the confidence and security - to the hope - of free people everywhere. Yours is one of the greatest contributions a citizen can make.

Should you choose to pass on to your grandchildren and great-grandchildren physical symbols of the good you represented in life, I would suggest two items that have distinguished your days. Certainly one is the American flag you carry on your right shoulder. The other would be the cloth tape that you wear over your heart, with its simple declaration, "U.S. Army." Those two pieces of your uniform speak volumes about both the quality of your character and who you were in life.

A proud salute to each of you for carrying on our proud legacy -- 229 years of service to the nation, and the cause of freedom.

Happy birthday, U.S. Army!



"Our operations in Iraq would be immeasurably more difficult if not for your efforts and dedication here in Kuwait."

1,300,000 miles and countilism

Transporters are more than just sweat and hot steering wheels

...our other

platoons had been

there for seven days

Spc. Karima L. Mares 13th Public Affairs Detachment

IRAQ—Imagine each day beginning with the prospect of long, dusty roads and temperatures reaching 120 degrees Fahrenheit on an average summer's day. Imagine snipers waiting for an opportunity to catch American Soldiers off-guard, mortars aimed at you and your comrades and realize that in the midst of this, you have a mission to complete. You and your unit must haul equipment into Iraq for

servicemembers on the front lines and if you fail, lives could be lost.

The sand-filled horizons of Kuwait and Iraq are much different green grass, leafy trees

for nearly six months, since

getting mortared... landscapes from the lush, and historical buildings that the 292 Soldiers from Kentucky's Heavy Equipment Transport (HET) National Guard unit out of Richmond

are used to. But that's exactly what the 2123rd

Transportation Company Soldiers have faced

Operation Iraqi Freedom.

To most, the daunting task of driving equipment back and forth between Kuwait and Iraq would eat away at them and they would be sick with anxiety, but for these unsung heroes, it's part of their everyday life and it's their job. For most of these Soldiers, the hardest part of it is being so far away from home. Still, they know what they are doing keeps their loved ones safe.

"I always told myself when I was in high school that I'd never join the Army, but here I am," said Spc. D. "Payten" Duke. "I'm doing my

duty for my country. My dad did it, my grandpa did it and my sister did it. I think I should probably have to do it too," he said. "I'd much rather be over here doing this than other Sgt. 1st Class Lester Adkins people in my family," Duke added.

> "The main challenge is being away from my family," said Staff Sgt. Thomas Payton, a Frankfort, Ky., native.

Payton said that the next most difficult parts of the job are, not surprisingly, the heat and not knowing

Explosive Device (IED), ambushed or mortared. "I think the scariest thing that's happened

stuck in BIAP (Baghdad International Airport) for five days. We got mortared on the way in the gate," said Sgt. 1st Class Lester Adkins. "Once we got in we found out one of our other platoons had been there for seven days getting mortared, but you get used to it," he said. "If they (the mortars) don't get too close, you can sit there and not pay attention to them," added Adkins, who has 23 years of military service

Photos by Spc. Karima Mares, 13th PAD

to me since we've been here has been getting



accomplish our missions, not only quickly, but safely as well. I feel like the National Guard is trained-up more than the active duty," he explained.

According to the 2123rd Truck Master, Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Willis, the unit has approximately 1,300,000 miles of road under their tires, since arriving in theater.

Even though another common problem for National Guard Soldiers is that often times it is more difficult to gain the support they need, the Soldiers of 2123rd Trans Co. have, as said in the Army, "sucked it up and drove on."

"We have several different kinds of skills coming into one unit from the civilian sector," said 1st Sgt. Michael Cash. "From doctors and lawyers to carpenters and plumbers, all of those different skills come together to make one unit. If we have a problem, there's most likely someone out of the 292 Soldiers who can fix it, or knows someone who can."

"In our company, we all help each other," added Spc. Cheyanne Baker. "In a lot of units, if a truck breaks down or gets a flat, then it's just those people who fix it, but with us, we get down and help each other."

Although their main job is to haul equipment up north, the truckers have to be able to load their cargo onto the trailers and chain it down correctly. It may sound easy, but sometimes it takes brute strength and stamina, especially in this environment, where the Soldiers have to wear gloves, so the metal, which you could actually fry an egg on, doesn't burn their hands.

Even though these Soldiers have endured many different obstacles since coming into this theater, they are keeping their minds open and hoping for the best.

lugnuts

trailer

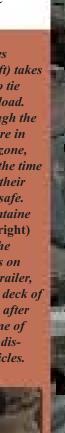
"I hope to become a better person, and get a better view of the world," Duke said. "Being here in this situation makes you realize how fragile life is and gives you a greater respect for it. When you have that control of life or death in your hands, it really makes you respect it more."

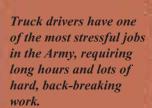
With so many different personalities, one might think that there would be a lot of conflict within the unit, but that isn't the case. The Soldiers of 2123rd Trans. Co. are totally at ease with one another. Some of them have known each other most of their lives and couldn't imagine being in a unit

where it was any other way.

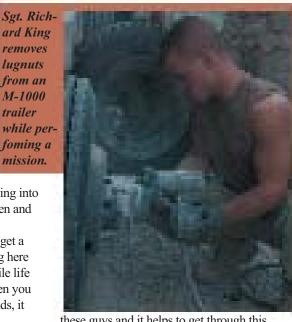
"I love

Spc. James Frisby (left) takes the time to tie down his load. Even though the Soldiers are in a combat zone. they take the time to ensure their loads are safe. Sgt. Lafontaine Gustave (right) controls the hydraulics on his HET trailer, lifting the deck of the trailer after loading one of their own disabled vehicles.

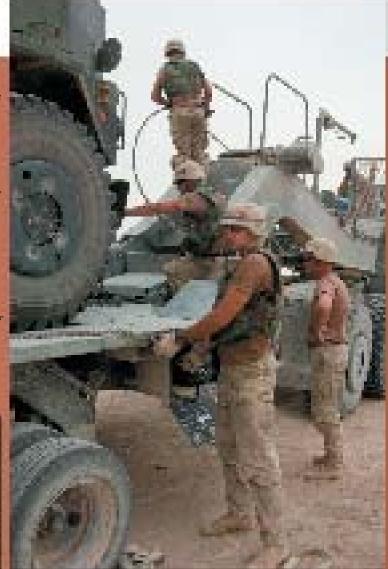








these guys and it helps to get through this deployment," Duke said. "They're a bunch of really good guys. I'd say my best friends are sitting right here with me now," he said. "I wouldn't want to be over here with anybody else, just a bunch of good ol' boys from Kentucky."



All regulations, and to the second se

A lot of times you have to be there, even though you don't wanna be The important part of mistakes is learning from them Being strong and tough are two different things Wisdom is knowing when to shut the %a*# up! Home is where you pitch your tent or cot **A successful team beats with one hear!** Keep in touch with loved ones There's no place like home **You can't always do it alone** Pee clear to survive here **Be considerate to others** Always have a buddy Smile and nod



recently extended 6 months after their initial 365 'boots on the ground' spent in Iraq. Thanks to New Haven, Conneticut's 439th Quartmaster Company, who were

note illustration by Staff Sat Frie Brown

FAST FURIOUS OVER IRAQ

Blackhawk warriors dust up Iragi sands

1st Lt. Celine Marini, CFLCC Public Affairs

The engines roared and the propellers started. Inside, the passengers anxiously sat knowing the next stop was Iraq.

"Five, four, three, two, one," the Blackhawk crew chief said as they pulled away from the flight line. They hovered for a few seconds waiting for the other Blackhawk, then were off to their next stop, Tallil, before their final destination, Babylon.

As soon as they flew over the berm, separating Kuwait and Iraq, the pilot lowered their altitude, allowing the crew chiefs to survey the landscape for possible insurgents.

Battalion, 171st Aviation, Georgia Army National Guard.

These aircraft transport a variety of passengers.

"You call it, we haul it," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Negron. "We fly all ranks to include high-ranking VIPs, Department of Defense officials and top brass from all branches to and from the battle zone on a weekly basis."

"Our unit transports people and supplies supplementing other military operations to sustain forces in Iraq and Kuwait," explained 1st Sgt. Mike



Photo by 1st Lt. Celine Marini
Despite a picturesque view, a Blackhawk door
gunner keeps a vigilant watch on the Iraqi
countryside.

222 VEARS ON ROINT



The Confinental Congress established the army on June 19th, 1775. In the 229 years shoes, it has preven Itself on the buildesteld as liberty's best friend.

"Our day-to-day mission is to provide general support. We fly to a variety of locations in Iraq and Kuwait at a minimum of three times per week," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Cole Daum, A Company, 1st Russell, crew chief.

"This mission is to swap passengers. We are bringing these Marines up north to replace Marines who are re-deploying."

The crew must be ready to fly at a moment's notice.

"We are on call 24 hours per day, seven days a week and can be ready to fly within

from 23mm shells. The Blackhawk crew chiefs sit at the side doors with M-60 machine guns ready to protect the aircraft.

One of the greatest challenges for aviators are the Gulf's conditions.

"You've got to take a look at the risks involved. It can be extremely dangerous."

"This is a tough environment with the heat, wind, and sand," Henson said. "Dust storms make flying a high-risk affair.

U.S. ARMY VALUES

SSG Michael Howard 7th \$ignal Brigade

"At three the this you have

Soldiers, put yoursell second

to think about your fellow

and get the mission

accumulished."

an hour," said Capt. J. Brent Henson, A Co., 1st Bn., 171st Avn., commander.

The Blackhawk can lift an entire 11-man, fully-equipped infantry squad in most weather conditions. It also has a cargo hook for external lift missions.

"If we can't get it in, we can sling it underneath," said Staff Sgt. Timothy Loveless, crew chief.

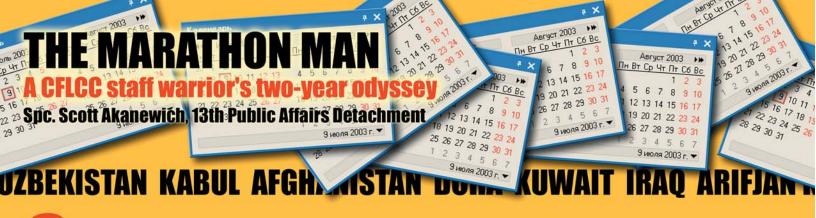
These Soldiers are well-aware of what lies in store for them each time they take to the skies over a war zone.

"The most dangerous mission aviators have is flying into Baghdad," said Henson.

Both the pilot and co-pilot are provided with armor-protective seats. Protective armor on the Blackhawk can withstand hits You've got to take a look at the risks involved. It can be extremely dangerous."

Despite being deployed away from their families and risking their lives daily, this Georgia Army National Guard unit has highly-motivated aviation Soldiers with a warrior ethos. They are equipped with modern systems and trained to world class proficiency, capable of strategic responsiveness and the ability to dominate across the full spectrum of operations. Army aviation is an integral part of sustaining Operation Iraqi Freedom.

A Co., 1st Bn., 171st Avn., Georgia Army National Guard, is deployed to Camp Buehring, Kuwait, which is located about 20 miles from Iraq.



CAMP ARIFJAN, KUWAIT- Talk about road trips.

Maj. Steve Hopper knows about road trips.

He's been on one now for over two years, only not the kind in which most Americans partake. No, Hopper, a budget officer with Coalition Forces Land Component Command, hasn't hit the road to Vegas or Disneyland, but more exotic locations ranging from Kabul to Baghdad to Kuwait and all points in between.

While most troops are deployed overseas for 12 to 18 months, Hopper has been living

in Baghdad, three months in Nasiriyah in southern Iraq, then back to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, where he currently oversees CFLCC's budget.

Hopper spent 11 years on active duty before getting out of the military. He then returned to service as a reservist before applying for and being re-assigned to active

For him, the decision was a no-brainer.

"I really missed the military," said Hopper, whose father and brother served during World War II and Vietnam, respectively. "I come from an all-Army

Gratification has come for Hopper in providing money for things ranging from improved armor for humvees to helping reopen a girls' school and womens' hospital.

"You really felt like you were making a difference in people's lives," he said. "My job is to support others."

Hopper is to the troops what a good offensive lineman is to a football team, he said.

"You have to learn that as a lineman, you're not going to win the Heisman, but the quarterback can't do his job without you," said Hopper.

The U.S. Army is serving in more than 120 countries, conducting a spectrum of missions from combat operations to immanitarian assistance



out of a ruck for 28 months and counting.

"I enjoy the deployments because it's where the action is," said Hopper

enthusiastically. "It's the patriotic streak in me."

Hopper's Homeresque odyssey began in Uzbekistan in January of 2002 where he served for 11 months at what was the logistical hub to supply troops in Afghanistan during the opening phases of **Operation Enduring** Freedom.

Of his many stops in theater, this was his favorite, he said.

"Uzbekistan is my favorite because I feel I helped build that camp," he said.

From there it was on to Kabul, in the heart of Afghanistan, for six months as part of a civil affairs brigade. Following that stint, Hopper's stays became shorter and more frenzied.

Six weeks at Camp Doha in Kuwait, two months with Combined Joint Task Force-7

family."

According to Capt. Michael Greenberg, Hopper maintains an office atmosphere

containing a balance of work and play.

"He knows when business is business and when it's time to lighten the atmosphere," said Greenberg.

Hopper's extended deployment hasn't been without its fair share of bumps in the road.

An earthquake and floods in Uzbekistan and rocket-propelled grenade attacks in Afghanistan have littered his path across the OEF and OIF theaters.

Still, he stays focused

"You have your infantry, tankers and artillery, but my role is to ensure they have what they need to do their jobs," said Hopper, who has allocated approximately \$2.5 billion over the course of his time in theater for just about everything under the sun.

Overall, he's happy for the experiences his time overseas has provided him.

"Sometimes you want to take a break and not see someone in a tan uniform," he said. "But I'm glad I had the chance to do all of this."



who has been deployed for 28 months.

Maj. Steve Hopper is a budget officer with CFLCC

on his mission as a budget officer.

SGT Jeremy Zamora 699th Maintenance Company "Respect for others is treating others as you want to be treated."

"Funding the fight," as he puts it.



Hooah for the **SBE team** in Iraq, you're doing a good job, I'll see you soon! Thanks to the troops in Kuwait for all your support. -- Sgt. 1st Class Santi Khoundet

Hello to all my **family and friends** back home in Virginia and Maryland. I miss you all! All of us here are honored to serve our country in the GWOT. God bless the USA! -- Capt. Michael A. Cunningham

Well **troops**, What an interesting way to spend the Army's birthday. This is what you were trained for, and this is what it's all about! -- Maj. Tim Bosetti

For 229 years, the **U.S. Army** has been the day of reckoning for tyranny, defender of liberty and crusaders of freedom. Every generation has its heroes and on this 229th year, **YOU** are those heroes. Be proud of what you stand for and keep up the good work. -- Capt. Stephen Rogers

Happy Birthday to the U.S. Army,

We could not do it without the dedication and perserverance of the **Soldiers** who have served in the past or are serving now. To the troops, keep your eyes on your goals and don't let anyone or anything get you down, you are doing your duty! -- Staff Sgt. Wayne Ashby

Happy 23rd **Kylie Minogue!** Good luck with your flyer - I hope your b-day wish comes true! I hope you have a wonderful B-day, **Sgt. 1st Class Oboro** - you're doing a great job! -- Sgt. Erica Jimenez

Jarrod, congratulations on winning the Battle of the Bands! -- Ness

Michelle, thirty days! Congratulations on finally going home to San Diego! Wouldn't you just rather extend for another six months? -- Spc. Marc Loi

Send your Message Board submissions (40 words or less) to karima.mares@kuwait.army.mil



Maj. Gen. Stephen Speakes, Deputy Commander, CFLCC, pins a silver star on newly promoted Brig. Gen. John F. Mulholland at a ceremony held recently at the American Embassy in Kuwait. Mulholland is a legend in special operations for his command of the 5th Special Forces Group during the war in Afghanistan. Mulholland and his unconventional warriors were key to the defeat of the Taliban. Mulholland currently serves as the Chief, Office of Military Cooperation, Kuwait.





Long-lost cousins come together in Kuwait

One morning, two strangers met over breakfast at the Camp Spearhead Dining Facility and hit it off immediately. Casual conversation reveals common links. The same locales. The same families. Soon, Sgt. 1st Class Ruby Spicer and KBR's Derrick Sutton realized they were cousins who had never met.

"It's such a small world!" said Sutton. "Here we are, 7,000 miles from home and something says, 'speak to this person'." The two are now best friends, calling each other every day and meeting for meals. Said Spicer, movements NCOIC, 385th Transportation Battalion, "Now we've got a little piece of home right here in Kuwait."



A band of brothers, fathers and cousins met from three different Wyoming National Guard units armed with warrior ethos—a Wyoming trait. Back row (l. to r.): 1st Lt. Terry Jenkins, Sgt. Tony Larson, Spc. Jon Rychecky, Maj. Brian Nesvik, Staff Sgt. Buddy Jones, Sgt. 1st Class Dean Barent, 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery; Command Sgt. Maj. Greg Bennick, 115th Field Artillery; Spc. Jarema Bock, Sgt. Justin Pfeiffer, 2nd Bn., 300th FA; Front row (l. to r.): Capt. Teresa Howes, 115th FA; Spc. Lane Larson, Spc. Tim Rychecky, 2nd Bn., 300th FA; Sgt. Daniel Nesvik, 1022nd Air Ambulance Company; Sgt. Levi Jones, Spc. Cody Barent, Sgt. Paul Benick, Spc. Chance Bock, Spc. Jampy Pfeiffer, 2nd Bn., 300th FA.

Courtesy photo

A salute from ARCENT-Kuwait's Command Sgt. Maj. Harold Gill

For the last two hundred and twenty-nine years, our Soldiers have fought for freedom and the American way of life. On June 14, 1775, the Army began its tradition by fighting for our freedom and clearing a path to democracy for the nation. A path that still remains clear today. The driving force that guides the American Soldier is simple; the values demonstrated by our forefathers who fought alongside George Washington at the very beginning. The other values, cultivated through the years are as follows: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage. These are promises that we make to ourselves and to the people of the United States on a daily basis. It is a promise that we will do whatever it takes to attain and maintain the highest military standards, on duty as well as off duty and to leave a legacy

of selfless service, commitment to excellence and love of country. It is a pledge to all those Soldiers who have come before us that their selfless service and sacrifices were not in vain. It is a promise that their commitment to the high ideals of this country, and the history on which the U.S. Army was founded will be carried forward for generations.

A row of white crosses, which stretches from Valley Forge to Gettysburg and from Omaha Beach to Khe Sanh, stands in silent testament to their courage and valor. To remain true to the memory of those Soldiers, who gave their last ounce of courage and paid the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom we enjoy, you should reaffirm your dedication to professionalism and commitment each and every day. But before you can do so, you must first understand what it means to be a



committed leader and Soldier. It is dedication to the American way of life and the future of the nation. It is a time-honored tradition that the Soldier protects and defends the Constitution which embodies our system of government and guarantees freedom for all Americans. America's military sons and daughters are the future of this great nation and the spirit of the American way of life.

From Command Sgt. Maj. Gill to all Soldiers, past and present, I would simply say, "Always Forward!"

Our Army is a campaign-quality Army with a Joint and Expeditionary mindset, serving our nation and its citizens for 229 years.



WEYERS UNROLL





You're skills and experience are vital to America's war on terrorism.

U.S. ARMY VALUES

NTEGRITY



SPC Rachel Jaeger

"If you're doing the right thing, you're leading by example. If you have integrity, you encompass Army values."



Maj. Gen. Stephen Speakes, deputy commanding general of Coalition Forces Land Component Command, introduces visiting U.S. senators to hospital operations at the Aerial Port of Debarkation recently in Kuwait. Sens. John Ensign, R-Nev., Bill Frist, R-Tenn., and Bob Bennett, R-Utah (not shown), were in Kuwait to visit with troops deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. After seeing the medical facilities, the senators toured Camp Wolverine where they had dinner at the dining facility with servicemembers from their respective home states. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Deborah Robichaux)

